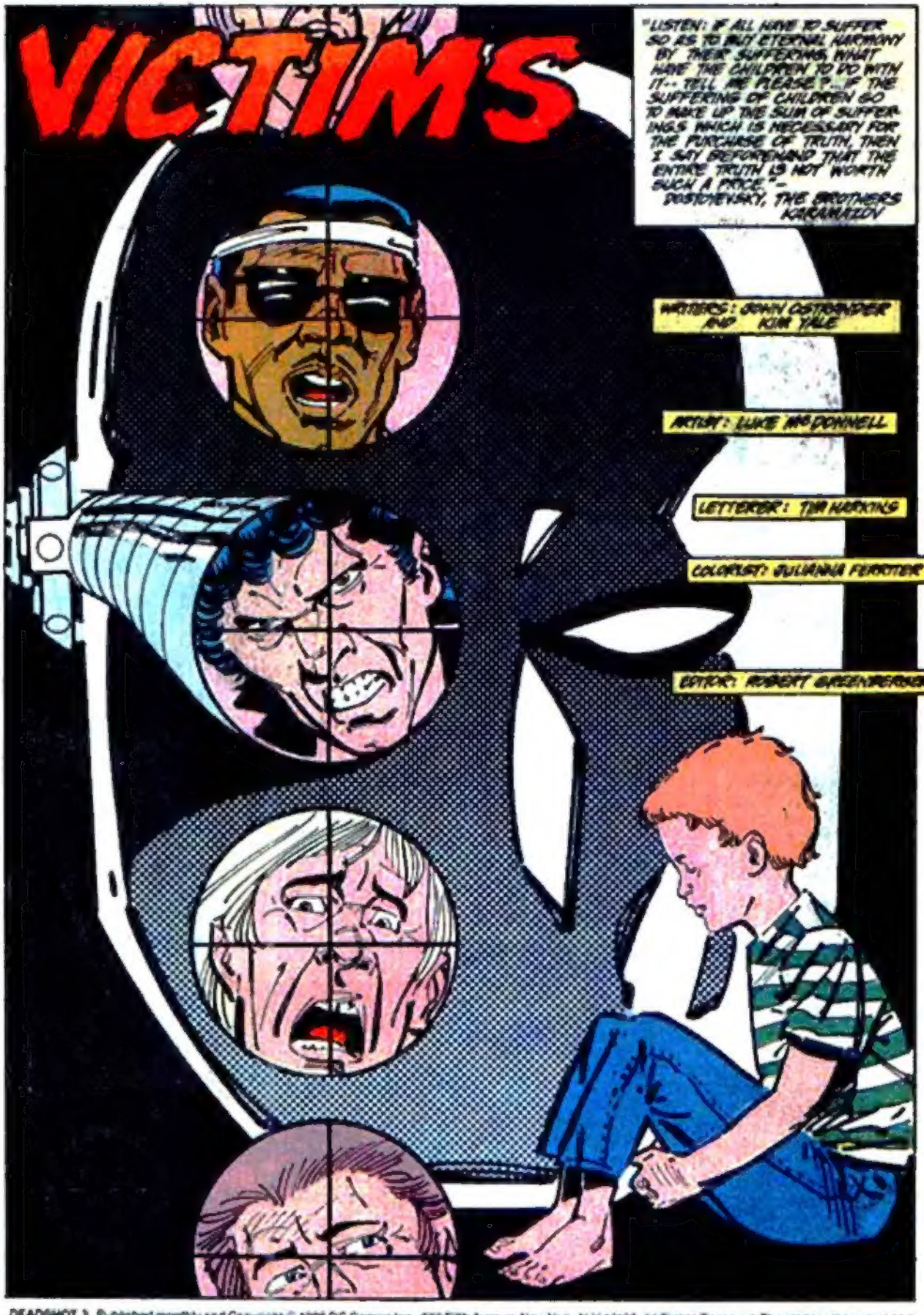
OSTRANDER, YALE & McDONNELL

DEADSHOT™

"SECRETS"

FOUR ISSUE MINI-SERIES



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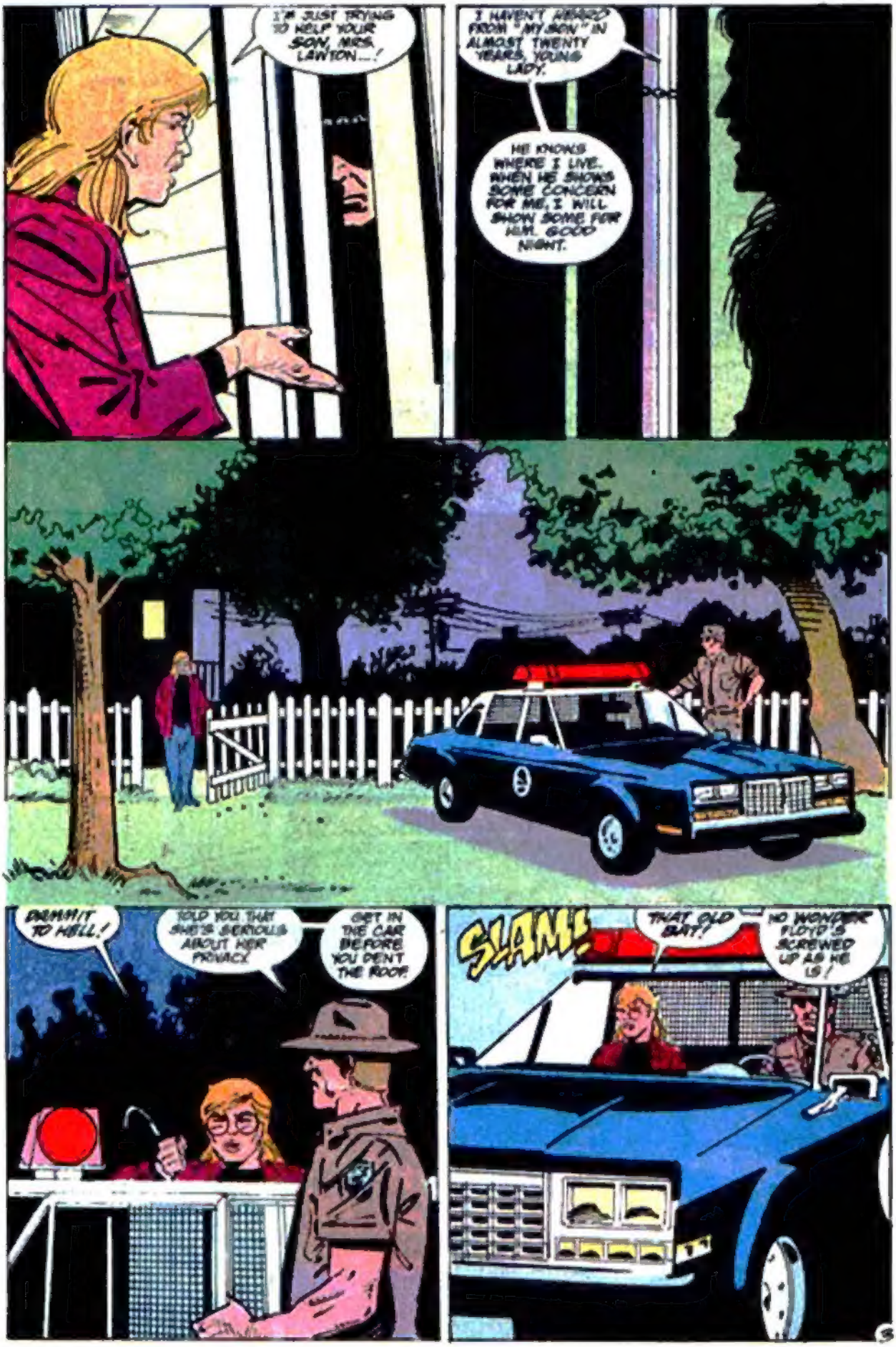
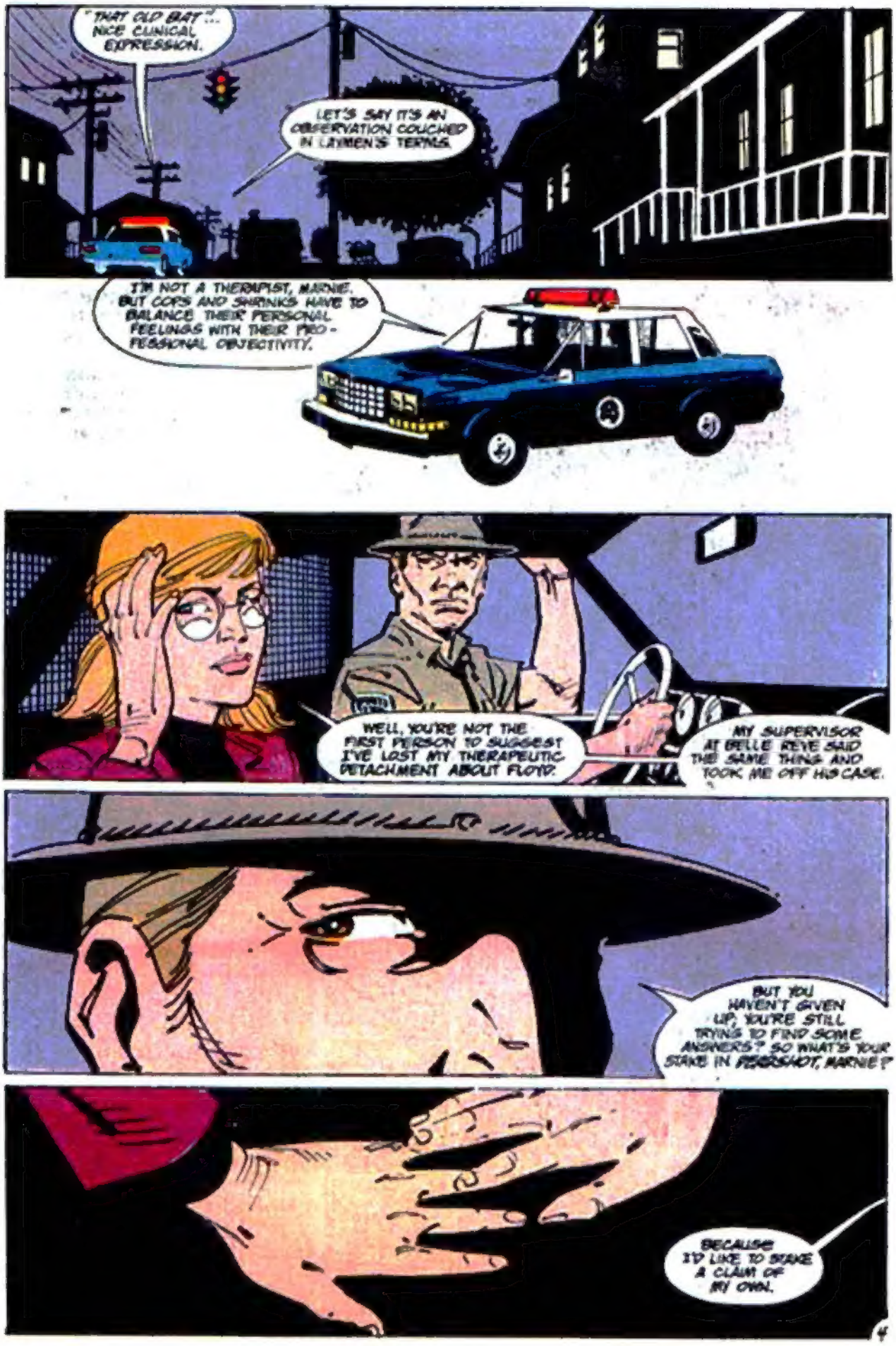
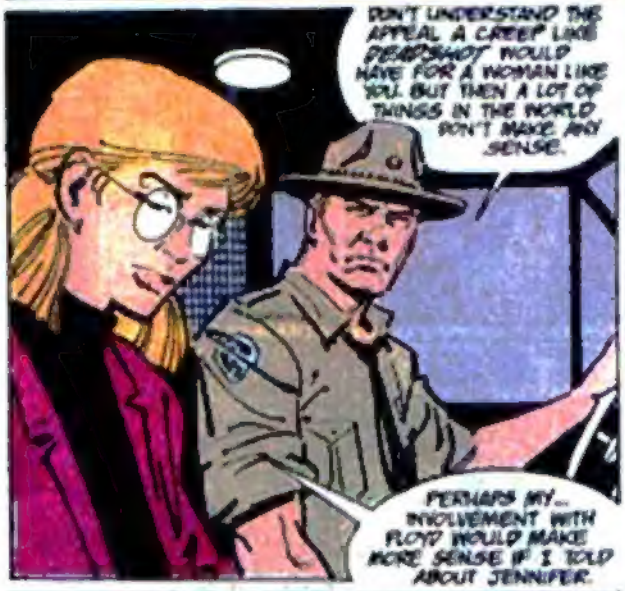
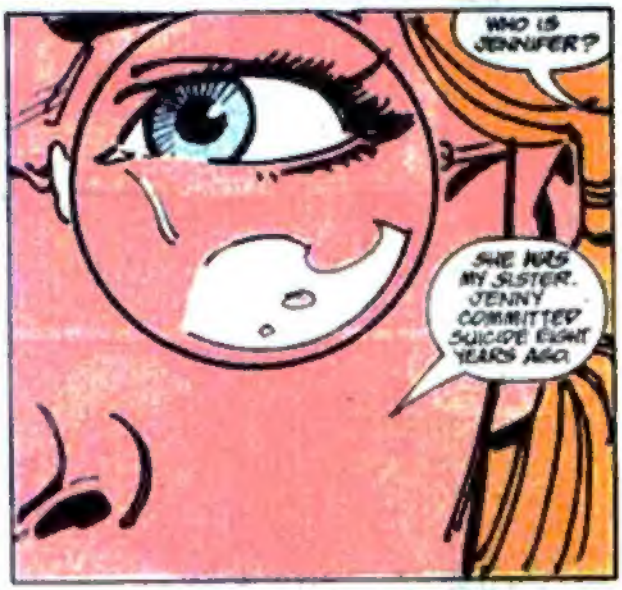
YES?
ARE YOU GENEVIEVE PITT LAWSON?
YES, I AM. WHO ARE YOU?
I'M MARNE HERRS, FLOYD'S THERAPIST. WE SPOKE EARLIER THIS EVENING BY PHONE.
AND I SAID I HAD NO DESIRE TO SEE YOU-- DIDN'T I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?


I'M JUST TRYING TO HELP YOUR SON, MRS. LAWTON...!
I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM "MY SON" IN ALMOST TWENTY YEARS, YOUNG LADY.
HE KNOWS WHERE I LIVE. WHEN HE SHOWS SOME CONCERN FOR ME, I WILL SHOW SOME FOR HIM. GOOD NIGHT.
DAMMIT TO HELL!
TOLD YOU THAT SHE'S SERIOUS ABOUT HER PRIVACY.
GET IN THE CAR BEFORE YOU DENT THE ROOF.
SLAM!
THAT OLD BAT!
NO WONDER FLOYD'S SCREWED UP AS HE IS!


"THAT OLD BAT"... NICE CLINICAL EXPRESSION.
LET'S SAY IT'S AN OBSERVATION COUCHED IN LAYMEN'S TERMS.
I'M NOT A THERAPIST, MARNIE. BUT COPS AND SHRINKS HAVE TO BALANCE THEIR PERSONAL FEELINGS WITH THEIR PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVITY.
WELL, YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST PERSON TO SUGGEST I'VE LOST MY THERAPEUTIC DETACHMENT ABOUT FLOYD.
MY SUPERVISOR AT BELLE REYE SAID THE SAME THING AND TOOK ME OFF HIS CASE.
BUT YOU HAVEN'T GIVEN UP, YOU'RE STILL TRYING TO FIND SOME ANSWERS? SO WHAT'S YOUR STAKE IN PEERSHOT, MARNIE?
BECAUSE I'D LIKE TO MAKE A CLAIM OF MY OWN.

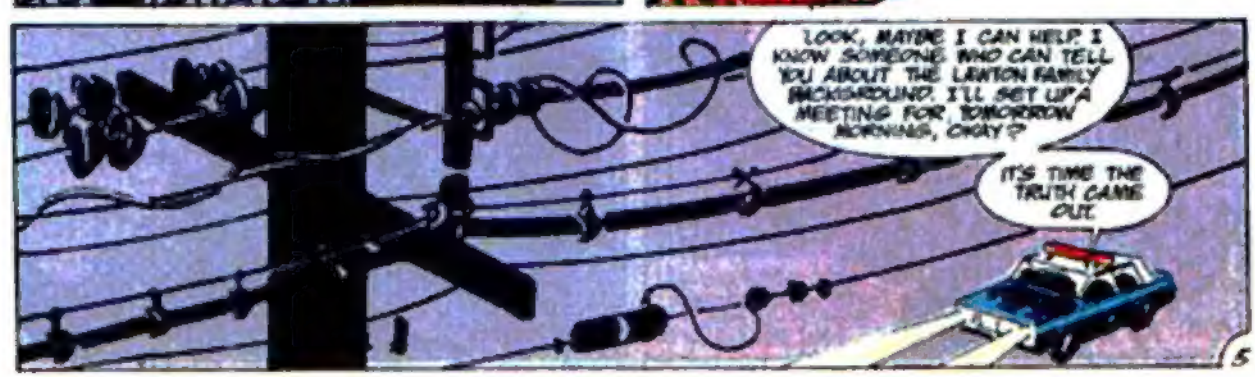
JOE, I... WELL... I LIKE YOU, TOO AND IT'S NOT AS IF THERE'S SOMETHING BETWEEN FLOYD AND ME. BUT I ADMIT MY CONCERN ABOUT HIM IS MORE THAN JUST PROFESSIONAL.


DON'T UNDERSTAND THE APPEAL A CREEP LIKE DEADSHOT WOULD HAVE FOR A WOMAN LIKE YOU. BUT THEN A LOT OF THINGS IN THE WORLD DON'T MAKE ANY SENSE.
PERHAPS MY... INVOLVEMENT WITH FLOYD WOULD MAKE MORE SENSE IF I TOLD ABOUT JENNIFER.


WHO IS JENNIFER?
SHE WAS MY SISTER. JENNY COMMITTED SUICIDE EIGHT YEARS AGO.

GOD, I'M SORRY. NO WONDER THE LINE GOT BLURRED WITH LAWTON'S CASE.

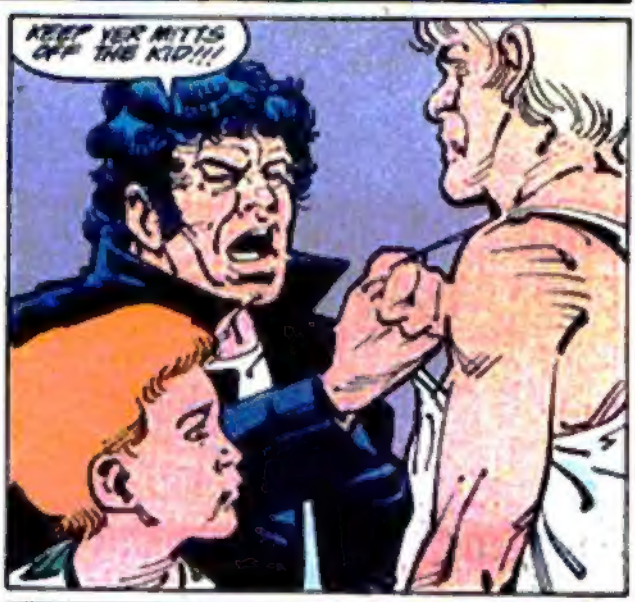
I CAN'T BRING BACK JENNY, BUT IF I CAN REACH FLOYD... I'M CONVINCED HE WANTS HELP BUT THE SHELL HAS TO BE CRACKED FIRST.


LOOK, MAYBE I CAN HELP. I KNOW SOMEONE WHO CAN TELL YOU ABOUT THE LAWTON FAMILY BACKGROUND. I'LL SET UP A MEETING FOR TOMORROW MORNING, OKAY?
IT'S TIME THE TRUTH CAME OUT.

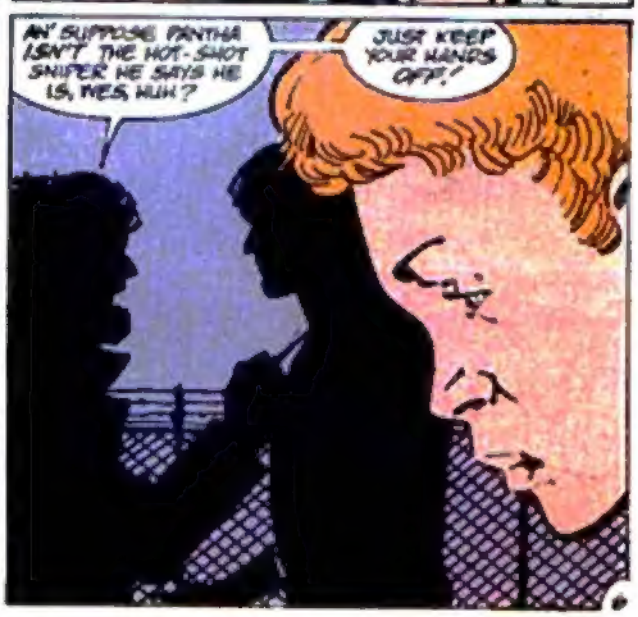
FODOR & SONS

SICK SCOUT, TAKE THESE GUYS AND GET UP ON THE ROOF. KEEP YER EYES PEELED!
WES!!

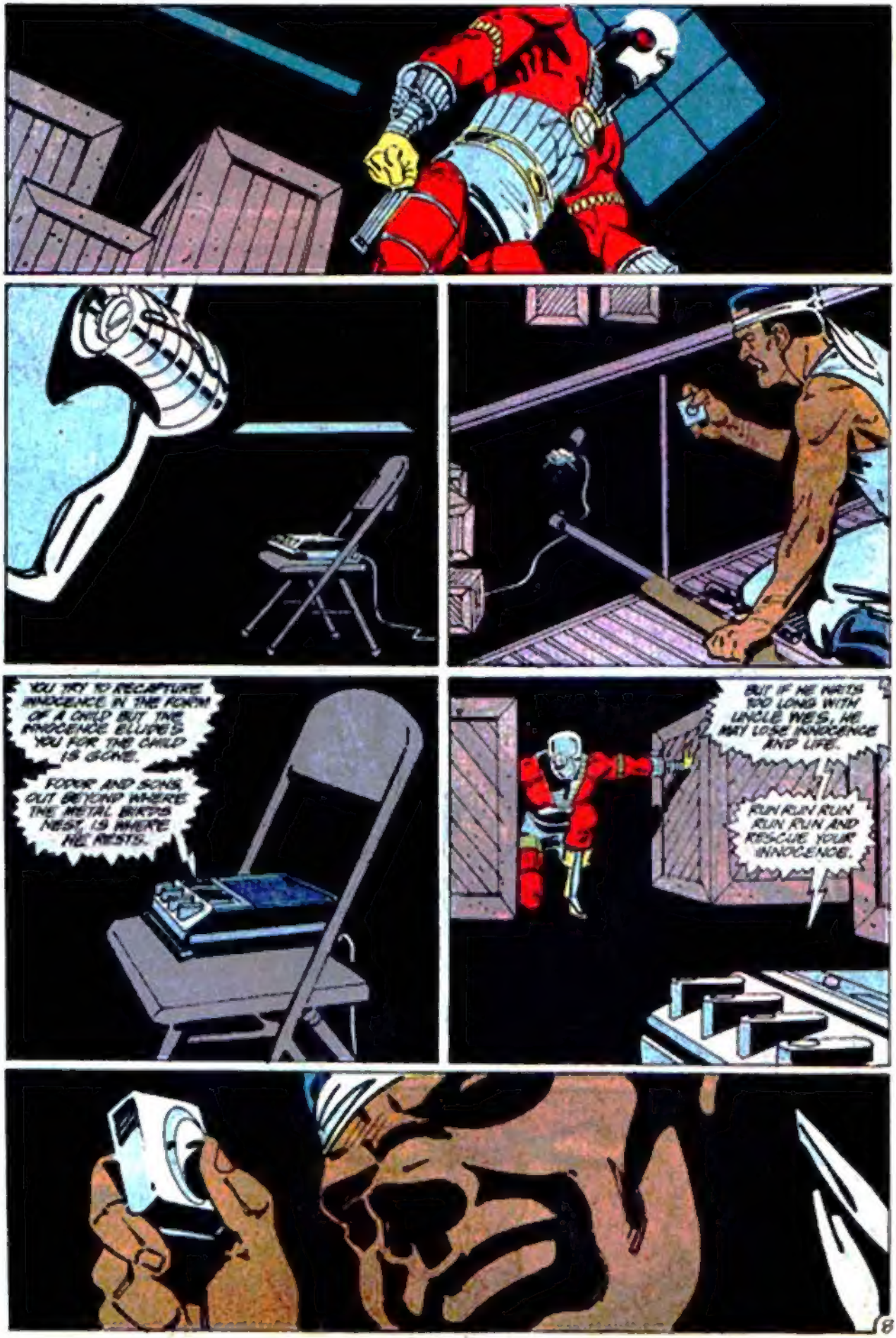
YER EARS STUFFED WITH CEMENT, OR WHAT?!

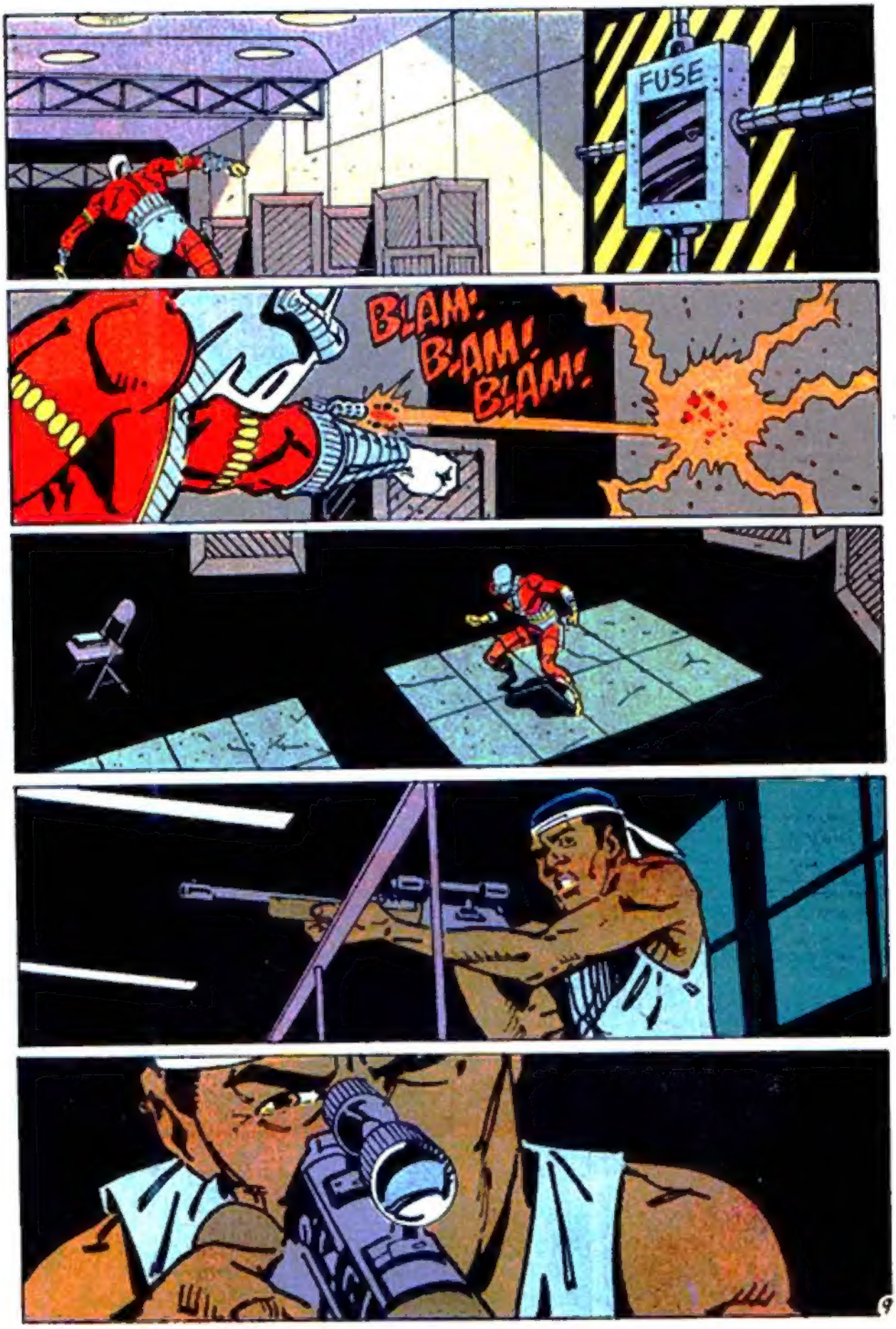

KEEP YER MITTS OFF THE KID!!!

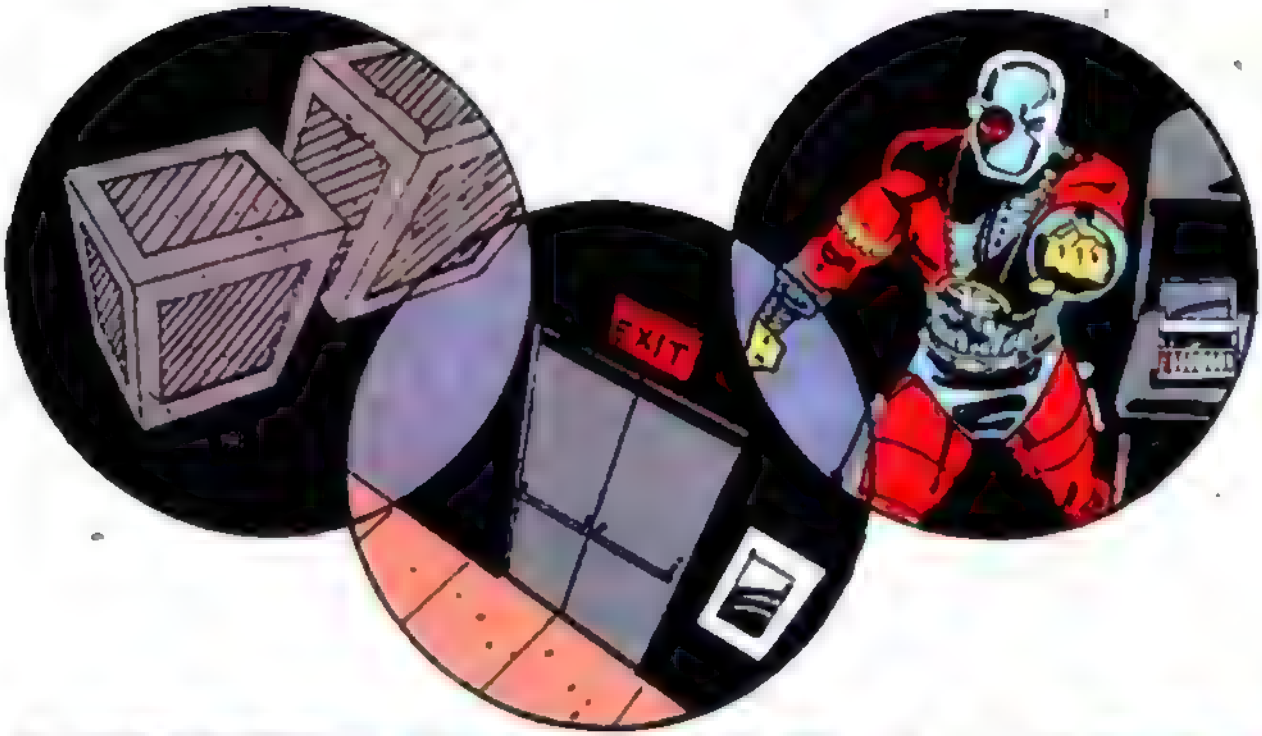
IF THE KID'S OLD MAN FINDS US, WE'RE UP T'OUR NECKS IN IT!
WELL, THAT'S WHY WE LEFT PANTHA BEHIND, ISN'T IT-- TO DEAL WITH DEADSHOT?


AN' SUPPOSE PANTHA ISN'T THE HOT-SHOT SNIPER HE SAYS HE IS, WES, HUH?
JUST KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF!

FOREMAN BROS.
EQUAL -- IDENTICAL -- FORCES IN MOTION, IN OPPOSITION, THERE MUST BE DEATH. WHAT ELSE CAN SATISFY?
LET IT COME.

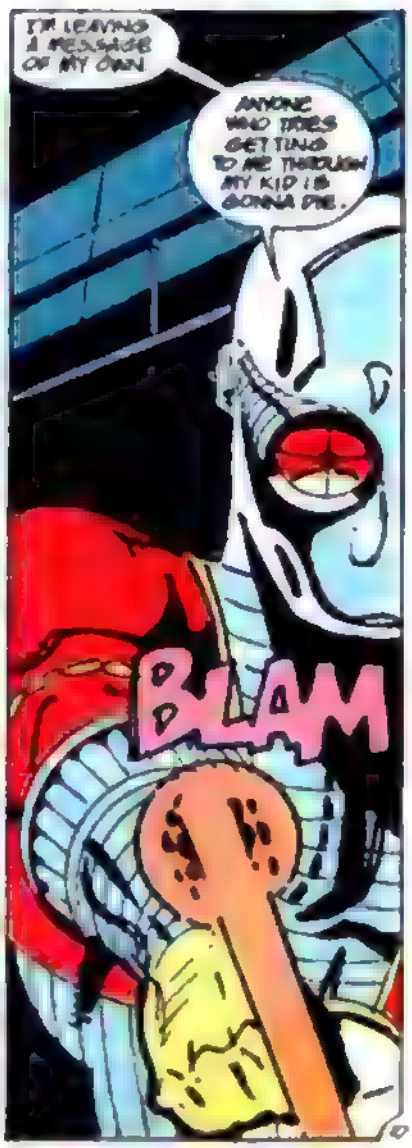

YOU TRY TO RECAPTURE INNOCENCE IN THE FORM OF A CHILD BUT THE INNOCENCE ELUDES YOU FOR THE CHILD IS GONE.
FODOR AND SONS, OUT BEYOND WHERE THE METAL BIRDS NEST, IS WHERE HE RESTS.
BUT IF HE WAITS TOO LONG WITH UNCLE WES, HE MAY LOSE INNOCENCE AND LIFE.
RUN RUN RUN RUN RUN AND RESCUE YOUR INNOCENCE.


FUSE
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!


EXIT

BLAM!

IGNORED... DOOR YOU REMAINED.. TO PURSUE. ME. INSTEAD. MOST BITTER DEATH IF FAILED TO RESCUE CHILD.. WHY?


I'M LEAVING A MESSAGE OF MY OWN.
ANYONE WHO TRIES GETTING TO ME THROUGH MY KID IS GONNA DIE.
BLAM

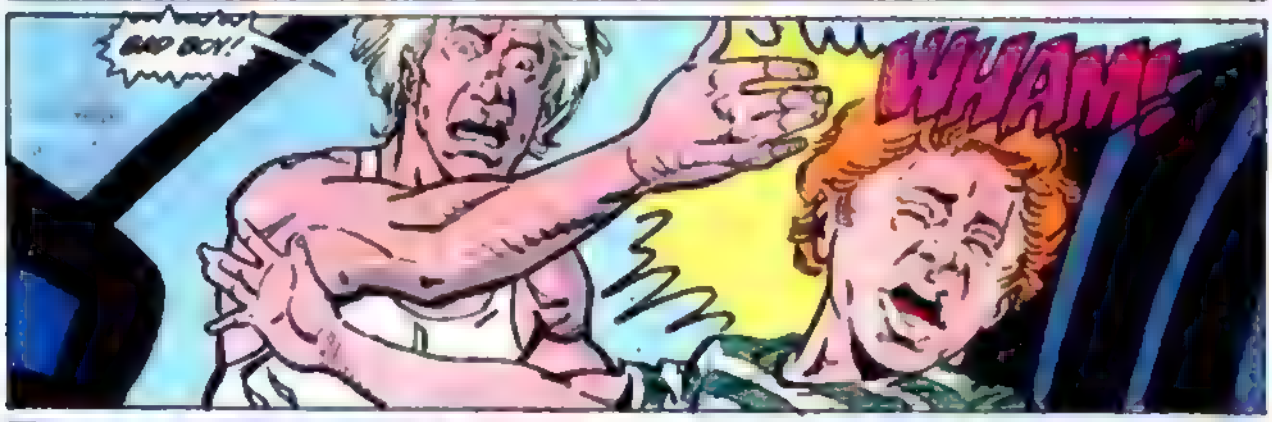
SCHRANGG!!

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

VING! VANG! SPRANG!
GET OUTTA HERE, WES! TAKE THE KID AND THE CAR!

AKKGGGH!

GET IN THE CAR! GET IN THE CAR! GET IN THE CAR!


BAD BOY!
WHAM!

I'M SORRY, LITTLE BOY! I DIDN'T WANT TO HURT YOU! WE'LL BE SAFE NOW! YOU'LL SEE! BE A GOOD BOY! EVERYTHING WILL BE... OKAY!

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM! BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
WHERE'S MY SON?
WITH MY... BROTHER MY BROTHER MES.
YOU HEAR... ABOUT MY BROTHER, MES? YOU KNOW WHAT HE DOES WITH LITTLE BOYS?

YES. WHERE IS YOUR BROTHER GOING?
GO THAT'S I'M DEAD ANYWAY.
WOULDN'T TELL YOU... IF I KNEW!
DON'T
BLAM!
"SOMEONE WILL KNOW AND SOMEONE WILL TELL."

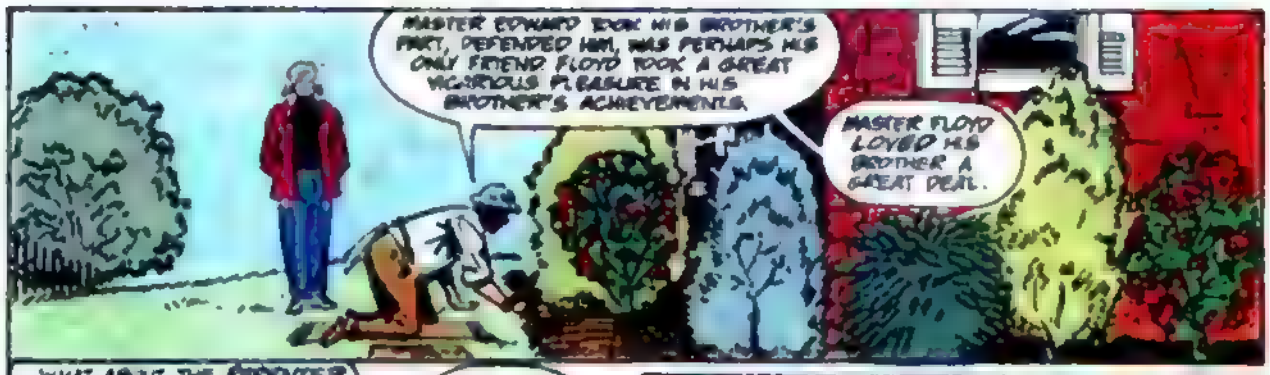
MR. BARTHOLOMEW?
I'M.
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. WE MET YESTERDAY.

SHERIFF TRUMCOTT...
...CALLED AND ASKED IF I WOULD ANSWER SOME OF YOUR QUESTIONS. I SAID I WOULD, IF YOU WOULD. BUT BRIEF. IT WOULD NOT DO FOR MR. LAWSON TO SEE ME TALKING TO YOU.

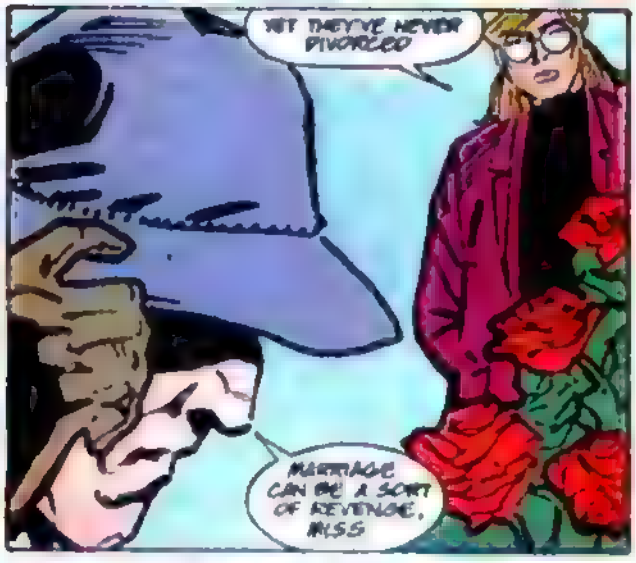
MR. BARTHOLOMEW, YOU'VE BEEN HERE FOR...
A LONG TIME. CERTAINLY THE PERIOD YOU ARE INTERESTED IN. WOULD YOU PLEASE GET ON WITH IT?

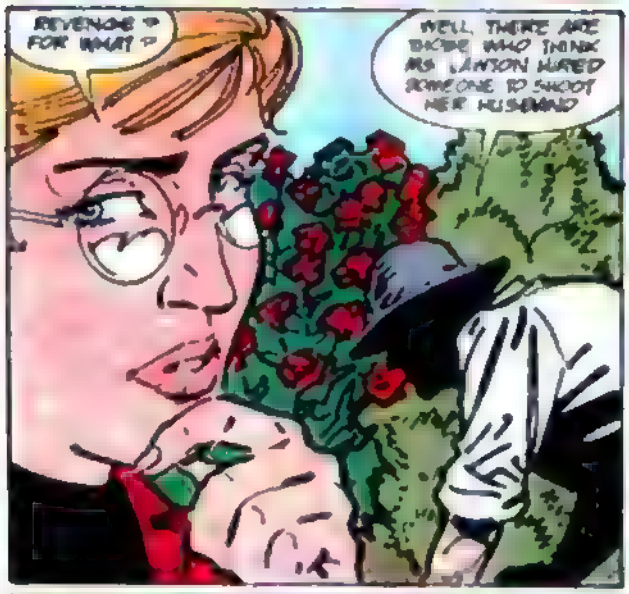
WHAT WAS FLOYD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PARENTS?
NOT VERY GOOD. I'M AFRAID THEY GAVE HIM VERY SHORT SHRIFT. HE SUFFERED BY COMPARISON WITH HIS BROTHER, EDWARD, YOU SEE.
BOTH PARENTS DOTED ON EDWARD. EVERYONE DID.

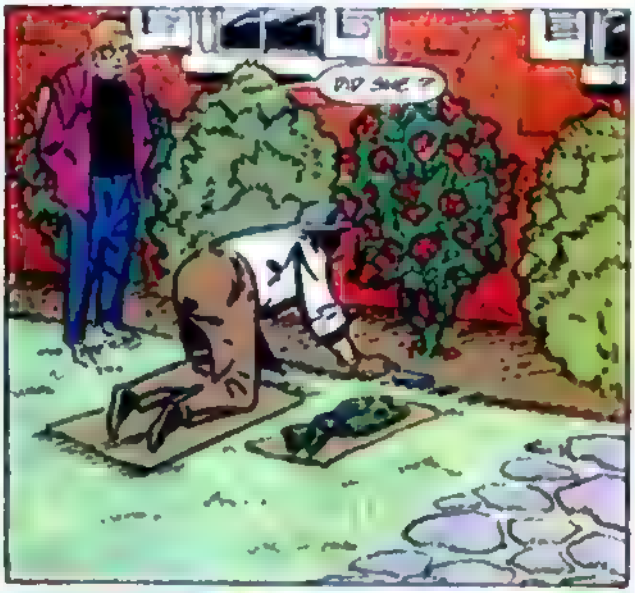
AND FLOYD RESENTED HIS BROTHER'S PLACE?
YOU WEREN'T LISTENING. I SAID [illegible] DOTED ON [illegible] EDWARD, MASTER FLOYD [illegible] OF ALL...

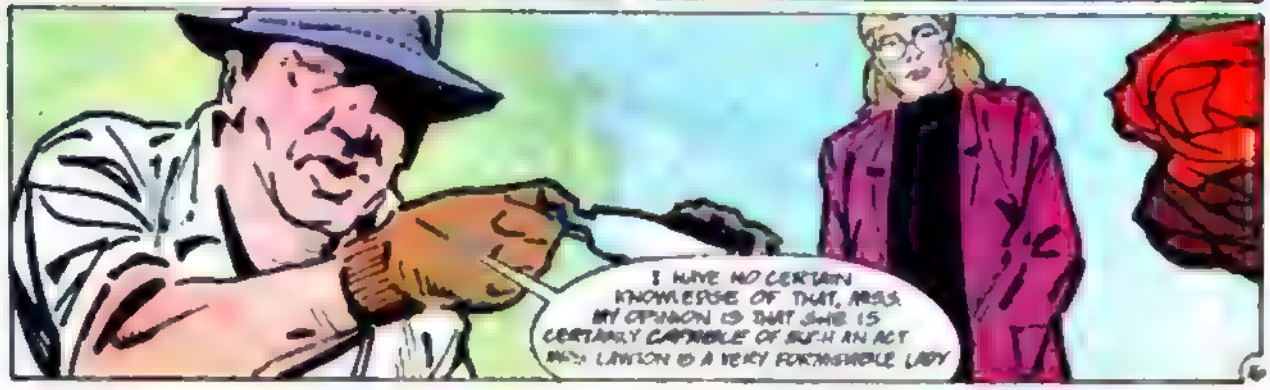

MASTER EDWARD TOOK HIS BROTHER'S PART, DEFENDED HIM, WAS PERHAPS HIS ONLY FRIEND. FLOYD TOOK A GREAT VICARIOUS PLEASURE IN HIS BROTHER'S ACHIEVEMENTS.
MASTER FLOYD LOVED HIS BROTHER A GREAT DEAL.

WHAT ABOUT THE PARENTS? THERE SEEMS TO BE A GREAT DEAL OF BAD BLOOD BETWEEN THEM.
THAT, MISS, WOULD BE RATHER AN UNDERSTATEMENT. THEY ABSOLUTELY HATE EACH OTHER.

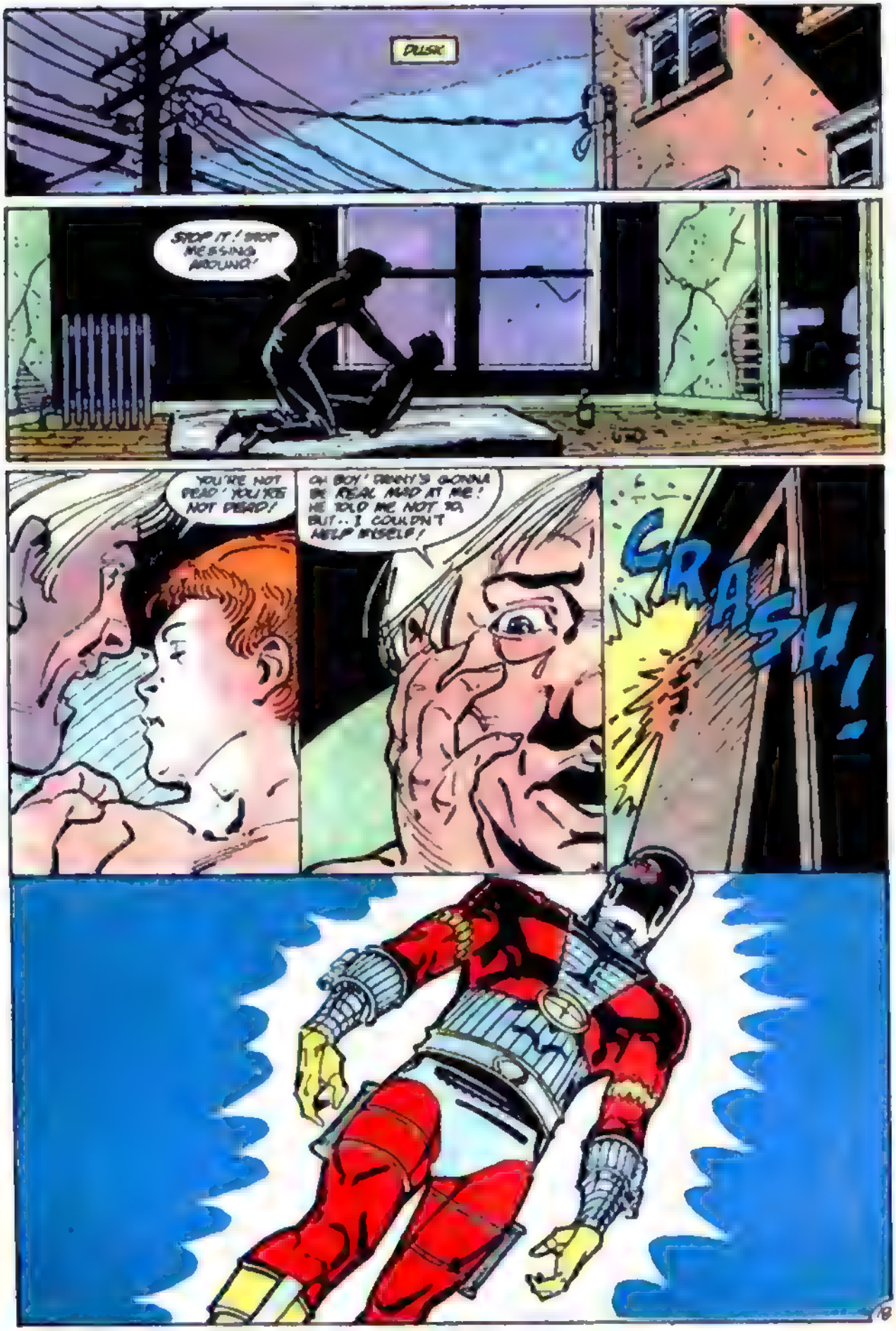

YET THEY'VE NEVER DIVORCED
MARRIAGE CAN BE A SORT OF REVENGE, MISS

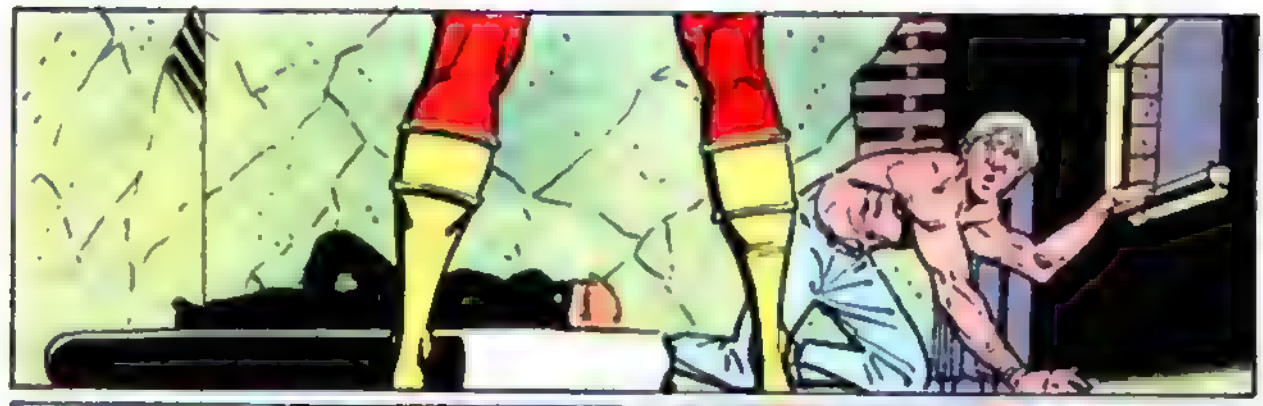

REVENGE? FOR WHAT?
WELL, THERE ARE THOSE WHO THINK MRS LAWTON HIRED SOMEONE TO SHOOT HER HUSBAND

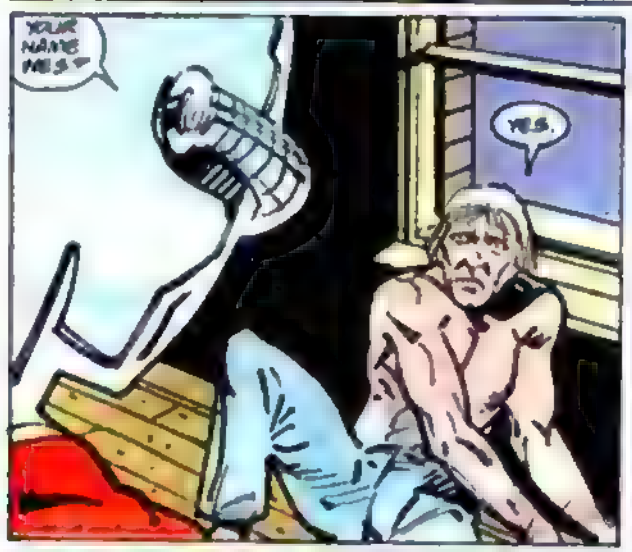

DID SHE?

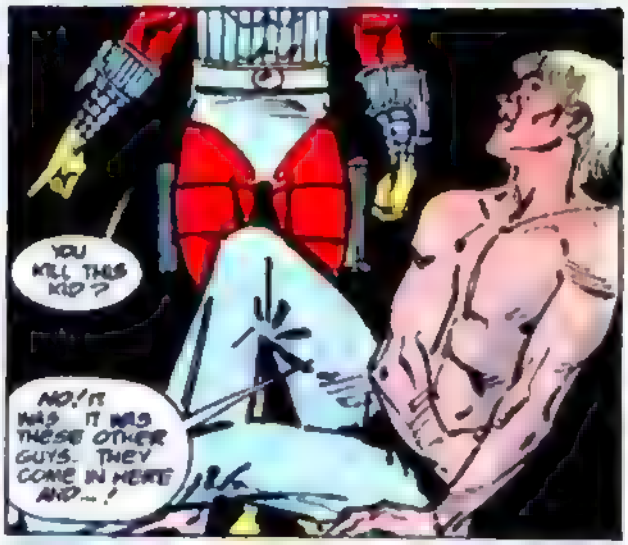

I HAVE NO CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE OF THAT, MISS. MY OPINION IS THAT SHE IS CERTAINLY CAPABLE OF SUCH AN ACT. MRS LAWTON IS A VERY FORMIDABLE LADY

YOU DON'T LIKE HER VERY MUCH.
I DON'T LIKE ANY OF THE LAWTONS MUCH, MISS.
BUT YOU WORK FOR THEM.
AND AM HANDSOMELY COMPENSATED FOR THAT FACT, MISS.
BARTHOLOMEW! WHERE ARE YOU?
I THINK IT'S BEST YOU WENT NOW, MISS.
ONE LAST QUESTION. DID FLOYD FIRE THE SHOTS THAT KILLED HIS BROTHER AND CRIPPLED HIS FATHER?
I'M SURE I DON'T KNOW, MISS.
BUT WHAT DO YOU THINK?
BARTHOLOMEW!
I THINK IT'S TIME YOU WENT, MISS.
THE ANSWER LIES WITH FLOYD'S MOTHER. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, I'M GOING TO SEE HER AND FIND OUT THE TRUTH.


DUSK
STOP IT! STOP MESSING AROUND!
YOU'RE NOT DEAD! YOU'RE NOT DEAD!
OH BOY! DANNY'S GONNA BE REAL MAD AT ME! HE TOLD ME NOT TO, BUT... I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF!
CRASH!




YOUR NAME MES?
YES.


YOU KILL THIS KID?
NO! IT WAS... IT WAS THESE OTHER GUYS. THEY COME IN HERE AND...!

BLAM!
EEEERRRGHH!

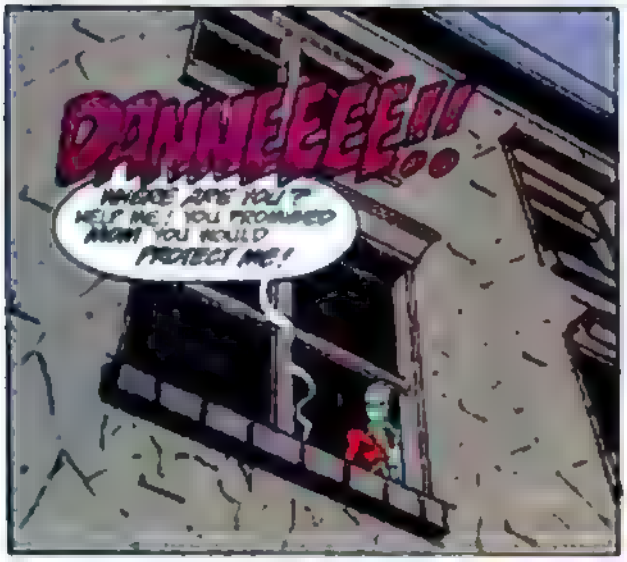
NO NO NO NO! MY BROTHER IS THE BAD BOY! I DIDN'T... I DIDN'T...!

BLAM!

STOP!
I DID IT! I DID! I... I DIDN'T MEAN TO KILL HIM...

WAS... A NICE LITTLE BOY... I LIKED HIM... WAS JUST TRYING... TO BE NICE WITH THE LITTLE...

BLAM!
ARRRGHH!


DANNEEEE!!
WHERE ARE YOU? HELP ME! YOU PROMISED MOM! YOU WOULD PROTECT ME!

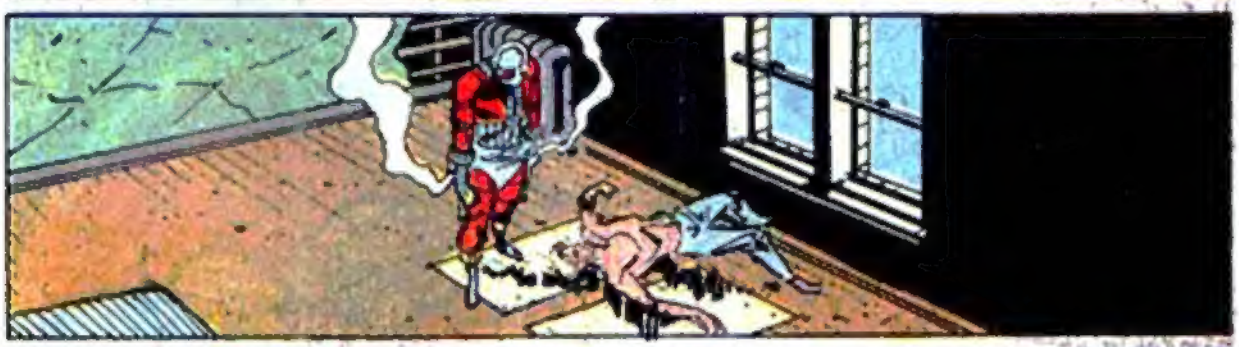
YOUR BROTHER IS DEAD

BLAM!
YAAAAAA

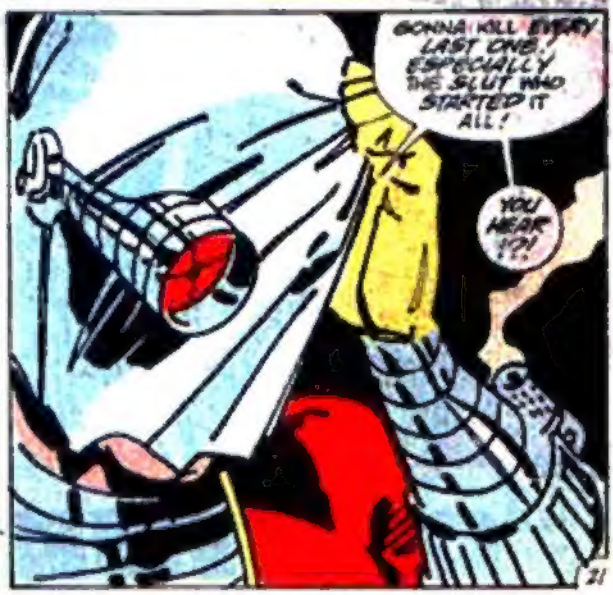
NOT MY FAULT!! WAS DANNY'S IDEA!

I'M SICK!! I NEED... HELP!!!

YOU NEED A GRAVE.
BLAM!



NOT ENOUGH. IT'S NOT ENOUGH.
THEY ALL GOTTA DIE! EVERY SINGLE STINKING ONE WHO HAD A HAND IN THIS!


GONNA KILL EVERY LAST ONE! ESPECIALLY THE SLUT WHO STARTED IT ALL!
YOU HEAR !?!

NEXT – THE CONCLUSION:

ASTRIDE A GRAVE

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L-3409

I love letter columns, always have. It always can be a disappointment whenever there isn't a chance to give readers an opportunity to voice their opinions. Which may explain why I encourage mail to mini-series when most don't. Considering that I have an outlet to run mail on DEADSHOT long after the mini-series had ended, namely SUICIDE SQUAD, I thought this would be an easier opportunity for the audience. Therefore, I sent out advance copies of issue #1 to selected Squad writers for their opinions. Three of those responses follow. When you, the rest of the audience, send in your comments, I refer you to the Squad where we will have the opportunity to respond.

Dear Mr. Greenberger,

I guess you did read all those letters I've sent to SUICIDE SQUAD after all, even though none have seen print to date! Else why would you send me a preview copy of DEADSHOT #1? I'm truly honored, just as I was when Marvel's Fabian Nicieza sent me an advance look at *Psi-Force* #16-17.

I wish more writers would give the complete quotation from which they get their titles, as was done this time! Although a better choice might have been. "Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once." Guess what Chatterton was saying was, "Dead is dead!".

Lawton sure is a class act, judging by his letter drop! One difference between comics and "real life" is that my ex-wife doesn't drop back into my life at the drop of a sub-plot! Loved the Sillage crack on page 4. Thank god for our sense of humor, or some of us wouldn't have any sense at all!

Page 6: No surprise there! Lawton must have a death wish if he volunteered for something with the optimistic name of Suicide Squad. Especially for more than one mission! Glad you picked up on that "pulling his shots" bit from SS #10 and I loved Bats' "if you could've you would've by now" comment. Maybe the answer to why Deadshot turned to crime and pulls his shots is the same: boredom with life! And a further reason for pulling his shots when he fights Bats is probably the same reason Bats has yet to kill The Joker and save the world all his senseless murders. Bats is the only man he's come up against in life who can truly give him a challenge, and he subconsciously doesn't want the game to end... just as Bats would rather have all those murders on his conscience than end the game of wits with the Joker. In other words, both Bats and Deadshot are two sick puppies!

Page 10: Now, that's the Deadshot I know and loathe! He's been rather constrained in SUICIDE SQUAD, which is probably the reason for this outing in the first place, eh? And those same panels also show the efficacy of using folks of his ilk on these missions, since good guys (with their misplaced values) are ill-equipped for this type of war on crime. Which is why we're losing the war on drugs, terrorism, etc. As long as we worry about bringing such scum to trial while all they concern themselves with is killing law enforcement officers and getting back to business as usual, we'll always come up on the losing side of the war!

What's with this "mook" thing? I've seen it in other mags and still don't get it. Floyd "has difficulties relating to women": boy, can I relate to that one! Have to agree with him on page 14. As for page 16, gee, you mean they don't trust Deadshot? I'm shocked.

Page 18: So much for El Jefe's vaunted security! He never heard of a Kamikaze attack? So it was Deadshot who finished off his old gang? I knew that. Black Orchid playing back-up, eh? Or was she sent to see if Deadshot had really gone over to the other side?

"Improvisation"? I guess you could say that, Waller. And I loved Deadshot reminding the Wall of her own rules in the final panels. About time some of these folks realized that she needs them more than they need her. And wouldn't that make for an interesting future plot-line?

Robert Kowalski
3878 Garvin Street
Detroit, MI 48212

Mook is a derogatory slang term. I can understand your confusion. It took me a while to figure out what Baretta meant when he called everyone a "jamoke."

• • • • •

Dear Bob,

It certainly was a surprise to receive photocopies of DEADSHOT #1 in the mail, but a pleasant one. Here are my comments.

To start off, I have to admit that Deadshot has never been my favorite member of the Squad—in fact, he's never even come close. I think it's because he has always been portrayed just as the villain with a death wish, with hardly a hint of any other factors to his personality. However, it is apparent that in this mini-series we will see a lot more of his feelings and emotions, so hopefully I will be able to stop regarding him as just another two-dimensional Batman foe.

The story was good. John and Kim make an excellent writing team on MANHUNTER and they created an interesting tale here, working in the obligatory origin section and the introduction of Floyd's ex-wife so that they merged into and became part of the main story, rather than just two separate bits. It was warming to see a possible romance between Floyd and Marnie in the offing and good to see Sarge Steel back again (wasn't he also meant to get his own mini-series at one time?).

The art was also good. It was nice to see that Luke had inked his own pencils. I never liked his art in JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA but he seems to have improved a great deal since then. I like his rather liney style—my only complaint is that some of the women tend to look a bit "mannish." Apart from that, he did a very good job.

Finally, as SUICIDE SQUAD is one of DC's more popular books and two of its members have already been awarded mini-series of their own (the other being Black Orchid) can we look forward to any other Squad-related series or even one-off specials? I was thinking specifically of Vixen, who was once going to have her own series before the infamous DC implosion. Any chance?

Gary Hellen
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Anything is possible in this world of ours. Yes, Sarge Steel was all set to return in a mini-series by Max Allan Collins and Dick Giordano but Max backed off with other commitments and now it is under development with Denny O'Neil as the scribe. There has been some discussion regarding a "one-off" featuring a member of the Squad, but he ain't Vixen. We'll see, though.

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Dear Bob,

Since the SUICIDE SQUAD premiered it has been made up of two elements ... the core members and the guest members. The guest members are good

to use if their particular ability is suited for a mission or if a large number of readers want to see a certain character show up. The emphasis on the book, however, should be the core group.

The difficulty with writing a group book is that sometimes it is not easy to give each character his or her due. For the most part, the individual stories are lost to the group action. A mini-series is the best way to rectify that.

This series brings up many questions that have been floating around since comics, and the Suicide Squad series in particular, began. Although there have been other comics where criminals were the featured characters (Joker, Secret Society), this is the first series that shows there are different sides to these people. Most often the only place you see a villain is in a hero's book where the emphasis is on the hero and the story is told from his perspective. Not here. In this first issue we see Floyd's psychiatrist asking herself the same questions we ask ourselves. Why did this man, who had everything he could ever want, decide to break the law? I don't know, but I'm hoping John and Kim let me know by the end of this series.

The most prominent part of Lawton's personality is his death wish. He constantly puts himself in situations where the odds of getting himself killed are very good. Why does he do this? As he told Waller at the end of this issue, he served his time ... he goes on missions because he wants to. Why? There doesn't seem to be any purpose other than the hope that he'll get himself killed somehow. If he wants to die so badly, why can't he blow himself away? I think it all ties in with why he becamea criminal in the first place.

Another question. If he didn't become a criminal for profit, is he really a criminal? If his only motivation was to get killed, then his intent wasn't really to commit a robbery or whatever else he did. He's not really a bad person, but a good person making a bad decision.

Suppose Marnie finds out the truth about Lawton and finds some way to erase whatever it was that drove him over the edge. Would he be any good in a fight after that? The thing that makes him so good is his lack of respect for his own life. If he has a reason to live, the caution that goes with that would prevent him from performing to his full potential.

I'm sure all these questions will be answered over the course of the series, but if they're not I'll continue to read SUICIDE SQUAD to keep tabs on Deadshot.

Bob Felber
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COMING ATTRACTIONS

It all comes to an explosive end in our final issue, so you won't want to miss it. If you've read this far, you won't need to be told.

Meantime, in two weeks, SUICIDE SQUAD #21 kicks off a two-parter that concludes the ongoing sub-plot with Derek Tolliver and Senator Cray. It's a shocker in the offing that will forever alter the Squad. Ominous, eh?

I'm looking forward to your mail. Until we next cross paths, keep smiling!

—Bob Greenberger

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